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My Note Book.

Leonato.—Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?
Don John.—Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.
Much Ado About Nothing.

LONDON, July 3, 1884.



THE exhibition at the Royal Academy does not show this year more than three or four pictures of the highest order of merit, although there are many interesting works of the second rank. In the matter of hanging, the committee, as usual, has distinguished itself for illiberality and perversity. This is shown particularly in its treatment of foreigners. Mesdag, perhaps the first of living marine painters—certainly the first in Holland—is brutally “skied.” Jules Breton, it is said, had returned to him one of his finest works, which was greatly admired at the Paris Salon last year. Americans are poorly represented. The best spaces on the wall are, as usual, occupied by Academicians, with no special regard to fitness. Rather, indeed, the contrary. What could be more dreadful than Mr. Herbert’s badly drawn and worse colored “Treasures of the Home,” if we forget Mr. Thornburn’s amazing “Daniel in the Lion’s Den”? But we must not be unjust. Perhaps the palm belongs to T. Sidney Cooper, who has on the line four pictures of cattle, one a canvas of enormous size. The beasts are all delightfully clean and well fed. For an agricultural show “Pushing off for Tilbury Fort” might make a good wall decoration, although it would certainly be severely criticised by the bucolic visitor; but as a work of art, compared with such cattle as those of Troyon or Van Marcke, it is really beneath criticism. Nor need Mr. Cooper go abroad to see much better painting in his own line. He might well learn from his brother academician, H. W. B. Davis, whose “On the Hill-side: Clearing after Rain” is second in merit to no landscape and cattle picture in the exhibition.

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THE picture at the Academy most talked about this year seems to be the “Cymon and Iphigenia” of the President, Sir Frederick Leighton. A soft golden haze suffuses the quiet sylvan scene. All tells of silence and repose. Admirably grouped and drawn with unerring skill are the sleeping figures in the foreground. The drawing of the nymph herself is masterly. So beautiful, indeed, are these that, with all respect for the accomplished painter, one might well wish to shut out from view the rest of the picture; for the shepherd and his too prosaic collie dog compel comparative criticism, and thus mar the enjoyment of the canvas as a whole.

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NEXT in popularity is the large painting of Mr. Alma-Tadema, “Hadrian in England: Visiting a Romano-British Pottery.” A potter, ascending a flight of steps, holds a tray of newly-made ware for the inspection of the Emperor. To the left of the picture the Empress is conversing with the master’s wife, a slender, fair-haired Briton. The picture shows to the fullest extent the virtues and failings of Mr. Alma-Tadema’s art. Faultless in drawing, marvellous in technique, carefully studied in composition, archaeologically, it is to be presumed, strictly accurate, it yet lacks the appearance of reality. This is largely due to the absence of proper aerial perspective and regard to values. The potters at work, on the left of the canvas, supposed to be seen in the distance, are painted nearly as strongly as the figures in the foreground, giving to, in some respects, a masterly picture the archaic appearance of an Assyrian basso-relievo. This odd appearance is increased by the silhouetelike head and shoulders of a red-haired Briton, shown in profile in the immediate foreground of the picture, from which it is abruptly cut off by the line of the frame.

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TAKEN all in all, perhaps the best genre painting in the exhibition is Mr. Orchardson’s “Mariage de Convenance,” showing an ill-assorted pair at opposite sides of the dinner-table. The young woman looks intensely disgusted, while the future partner of her joys and sorrows, who is by many years her senior, has an air of placid indifference, and seems more interested in the wine the butler is pouring out for him than in the unfortunate lady who bears him company.

The story is admirably told, the drawing is good, the lighting too artificial, perhaps, the color subdued but excellent. How different from the work of Edwin Long! His pictures show some technical skill, but no spark of genius. They tell no story of their own, and one must consult the catalogue to find their meaning. It is difficult, indeed, to understand why people should pay the high prices for them which they seem to command. In his “Judith” this year we have a wretchedly weak performance, which might as appropriately have been labelled “Judy.” Another, called “Thisbe,” is equally meaningless. It would seem as if Mr. Long’s method were to dress and pose a studio model on the fancy of the instant, and only at the last moment think of a name for it.

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BRITON RIVIERE has four pictures; but none of them show him at his best. “The Eve of St. Bartholomew” is the portentous title he gives to the single figure of a not particularly well-drawn young woman throwing her arms frantically around the neck of a dog cleverly foreshortened. “The King and His Satellites,” showing a lion with a troop of grinning little jackals at his heels, in spite of the great knowledge it displays, comes very near to being ridiculous. George H. Boughton is well represented by “A Village Below the Sand-dunes at High Tide”—a breach making in the dyke—on the Island of Walcheren; and “A Field Handmaiden—Brabant,” showing a vigorously drawn young woman tugging away at a basket of cabbages which she is trying to carry. Thomas Faed’s “The Keeper’s Daughter,” impossibly tall and glaring in color, has mercifully been toned down by being placed next to Hook’s sunny “Cornish Sea,” which, however, is killed by the contact.

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W. P. FRITH, who generally treats the Philistines to some realistic scene of English life, with plenty of portraits in each picture, this year does something much better. His “Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Siddons” shows good drawing, carefully studied expression, and only wants color—which, it is to be feared, the artist is now too late in life ever to acquire—to make it an admirable painting. It represents a morning call upon “the bear-skin sage,” who, however, is here represented, according to a letter of the great tragedienne recording the incident from which the picture is taken, as “extremely, though formally polite, always apologizing for not being able to see me to my carriage, conducted me to the head of the stairs, kissed my hand, and, bowing, said, ‘Dear madam, I am your most humble servant,’ and these words were always repeated without the smallest variation.” Another historical picture even more interesting is “The Toast of the Kit-Cat Club,” by W. F. Yeames, told in the following anecdote: “It having fallen to the turn of the Duke of Kingston to propose a beauty as the annual toast of the club, he nominated his little daughter, Lady Mary Pierrepont (afterward Lady Mary Wortley Montagu). Some of the members demurred, as they had not seen her. The duke sent for her, and when she arrived she was received with acclamations, her claims unanimously allowed, and she was petted and caressed by all the eminent men present, including Addison, Steele, Marlborough, Congreve, etc.”

* * *

LUKE FILDES this year, with his pictures of Venetian life, is a veritable bull in a china shop. He has come out with big canvases of the most gorgeous coloring of pretty girls and summer flowers. His brother Associates do not know what to make of him. In his new departure he certainly shows amazing cleverness, and his brilliant palette fairly lights up the galleries where his pictures hang. But whether this unlooked-for “chic” will please his wisest friends is doubtful.

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HUBERT HERKOMER, whose Castle Garden picture—called “Pressing to the West”—promised so much when I noticed the sketch at his studio in New York last year, is most disappointing. Of course, it is painted with vigor. Mr. Herkomer never lacks that quality. But the picture is coarsely done, is disagreeable in color, and it fails completely in sentiment. Yet the composition is so good that I cannot but think the failure is chiefly due to the lack of proper models for the completion of the work. In

consequence of domestic bereavement Mr. Herkomer, it may be remembered, was called suddenly home; and to this misfortune may reasonably be ascribed the non-success of a work which, in its early stages, bade fair to be his best.

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THE London aquarelle exhibitions are uncommonly interesting this year. At the Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colors one of the best-told stories is “A Bible Reading,” by E. A. Abbey. It is painted in body color, almost in monochrome, and looks as if made with a view to photographing down on the block for wood-cutting. In technique it is certainly widely different from anything seen of his at American water-color exhibitions. The scene is the interior of a Puritan home, with one particularly pretty Puritan maiden, whose thoughts apparently are far away from the severe-featured man who is reading from the sacred volume. The best water-color in the collection is “Among the Missing,” a most admirable drawing by Walter Langley, a young man who came from Manchester, I think, only two or three years ago, and until last year was almost unknown. The story told is of a young woman who, fairly beside herself from grief, has just made her way from a heart-broken group of villagers who are besieging the little post-office for news, probably from a shipwreck. One hand covers her eyes, and the other is held by an old woman who is trying to console her. In a small compass and with a most difficult medium, Mr. Langley has produced one of the most affecting pictures I have ever seen. One is so impressed by the well-told story that at first he is little inclined to inquire how the success has been won. But the technique of the picture will bear the closest scrutiny. By pure washes of color the most surprising contrasts of texture have been attained; there is a charming sense of atmosphere, which almost smells of the sea; and, while all necessary details are plainly indicated with delicacy and precision, the general handling is uniformly broad and artistic.

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MANY other drawings at this exhibition are well worthy of notice, but lack of space at present forbids mention of but one other name, that of a young lady, whose work from year to year has been noted for its peculiarly feminine grace in handling and its purity of color. I speak of Miss Mary Eley, who shows at this exhibition a large drawing called “No.” It represents a servant wearing the livery of the Pope, who has been deliberating whether he should deliver or not a letter he holds in his hand. But Miss Eley’s best efforts I find in the representation of children and pretty young women. Her picture at the Royal Academy this year, called “Envy,” shows two rosy-cheeked little girls, one of whom is the lucky owner of a small dog coveted by the other. Miss Eley’s fancy portrait of a young lady, shown at the Academy last year, was justly regarded by many of the Associates as by far the best-painted head in the water-color rooms.

* * *

MR. MALCOLM MORRIS, who has much knowledge as to diseases of the skin, has won a good deal of favorable comment from the London press recently by a clever lecture on his specialty, directed particularly toward certain fashionable follies of such of his fair countrywomen as worship at the shrine of Algeron Swinburne and Mr. Burne-Jones. He knew better than to announce directly the object of his satire. To have done so would have kept away the very element of his audience which he most desired to reach. So he was advertised to lecture on “The Ethics of the Skin.” The mysticism of the title brought out just such a representation of the select world of artistic melancholic imbecility as he wished for; and when he had thus secured his audience, he proceeded to castigate them gracefully but firmly with a birch rod made up of historical facts and literary satire, neatly tied with the ribbon of common-sense and medical science.

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It is hard to account for English women who so long prided themselves on the healthy color of their skins, their joyous spirits, and well-developed figures yielding so readily as they did to the silly doctrines of æsthetic misery and melancholy. I have never heard who set the fashion. It was probably some bony, pasty-complexioned young woman in high social circles, who, despairing of winning admiration according

to prevailing canons of beauty, boldly resolved to make the best of her physical deficiencies, which, by a clever arrangement of coiffure and drapery, could be made sufficiently pronounced to be declared original. Some artist of the woe-begone school doubtless stood godfather to the neophyte; perhaps it was Mr. Burne-Jones himself. Can no one give the name of the lady? It is indispensable to the historian of fashion of the latter half of the nineteenth century. We know that patches owed their origin to a distinguished lady—whose name I have forgotten—who wished to conceal a wen on her neck; that the fashion of very décolleté dresses was set by Isabella of Bavaria, who believed that she had a beautiful bust; that the long, loose gloves of modern times were invented to hide the fleshless arms of a famous French tragedienne, and that the clouds of tulle worn about the neck originated in the attenuation of the neck of the same distinguished lady. Probably the humps on the shoulders now fashionable originated in a device to conceal the deformity of some person of fashion. The corresponding hump of greater dimensions, I suppose can hardly be accounted for in the same way, and must be attributed to Caucasian envy of superior physical Hottentot development.

FASHIONABLE foibles in the dress of the sterner sex are no less identified with the accident of circumstances. Full-bottomed wigs originated in a device to conceal the fact that the Dauphin had one shoulder higher than the other; Charles VII., having mishapen legs, made long-tailed coats the fashion; Henry of Anjou invented long-toed shoes to hide a defect in one of his feet; and because Francis I. had his hair cut short to protect a wound in his neck, a close crop became the rule throughout the world of fashion.

THE results of the sale at Christie's of the celebrated Fountaine collection of Limoges enamels, Majolica, Henri Deux, Palissy, and Nevers wares, carved ivories, ancient coins, and old armor has more than realized the anticipations of connoisseurs. Seven thousand guineas were paid by Mr. Wertheimer for a large oval dish about twenty inches by seventeen, with sunk centre, in which Raphael's "Supper of the Gods," in colored enamels on a dark blue ground, is used by Leonard Limousin to introduce the portraits of Henri Deux, in the centre, Catherine de Medici on one side of him, and Diane De Poitiers on the other side. Anne de Montmorency, Constable of France, is introduced as Hercules, and there are also portraits of his wife and child, the Emperor, and various winged females. All the figures are said to be authentic portraits, and they are finished with the care of miniature painting. A somewhat large dish, in colored enamels, by Jean Courtois, sold for 2800 guineas, and a ewer by the same master brought 2300 guineas. One of the most active bidders for these and other fine pieces was Mr. Edward Joseph, who finally secured, for 1250 guineas, for a member of the Rothschild family, I am informed, a fine antique-shaped ewer about eleven inches high, signed "Susanne Court." The ground is dark green, and there are numerous figures admirably executed. A detailed description of this splendid piece may be reserved for a future occasion.

A SALE of such importance cannot be dismissed in a few Note-Book paragraphs. So until justice can be done to the subject in a later issue of this magazine, I will content myself by simply referring now to the purchase of the three famous pieces of Henri Deux, which are among the finest examples known of this beautiful and extremely scarce ware. They were all bought for M. Dutruit, a great collector at Rouen. The most notable piece was the flambeau, about thirteen inches high, for which he paid 3500 guineas. For the exquisite little "mortiere à cire"—eight inches in diameter and five and three quarter inches high—M. Dutruit paid 1500 guineas. The "biberon"—nine inches high—formed as a vase, with handles on each side and across the cover, brought 1010 guineas.

THE subjoined figures are given by a Paris journal as showing the money spent since 1877 in the purchase of pictures from the Salon by American dealers. They are said to have been received at the United States legation: In 1877, \$701,000; 1878, \$630,000; 1879, \$1,051,000; 1880, \$1,392,000; 1881, \$1,668,000;

1882, \$1,997,000; 1883, \$1,754,000. The editor comments as follows: "Soit pour 50 millions de francs environ en sept ans. Et cela indépendamment des toiles achetées directement à nos artistes par de riches particuliers. L'impôt de 30% que les Américains se proposent d'établir sur les œuvres d'art de provenance française serait donc pour eux d'un assez joli rapport; mais cela ne suffit pas à le justifier."

THE American artists obtained no recompense, whatever, at the Salon this year owing to the tariff question. A portion of the jury, who considered that they had simply been duped by the agitation of the committee of American artists in Paris, which has been doing its best to create a movement in Congress favorable to the reduction of the thirty per cent tax on works of art to the former ten per cent tax, formed a cabal and hooted "Américain! Américain!" whenever any American picture was proposed for honors. The consequence was that no vote was taken on any American artist's work. Nevertheless it was recognized that, had it not been for this unfortunate incident, Alexander Harrison and J. L. Stewart would have had medals for certain, and that at least half a dozen other recompenses would have been awarded to Americans, so brilliant is the place they hold at the Salon this year. I may add that the majority of the jury are indignant at the conduct of the noisy anti-American cabal, which was headed by MM. Feyen-Perrin, Lansyer and what is called the Café Hollandais clique, and that next year the Americans may look forward to being compensated by very liberal treatment for the injustice they have suffered.

IN the departments of painting and sculpture, no artist having obtained the required majority of votes, no medal of honor was awarded this year. MM. Bouguereau and Cormon among the painters, and M. Mathurin Moreau among the sculptors obtained the most votes. In the department of engraving the medal of honor was voted without hesitation to M. Bracquemond. In the section of architecture no medal of honor was voted. The diversity of opinion thus manifested by the artists in the three departments of painting, sculpture and architecture shows at once the difficulties of the exercise of universal suffrage in art, and at the same time that there was really no work so striking as to thoroughly deserve the supreme reward of the medal of honor.

A VERY important collection of one hundred and thirty-four water-colors by Gavarni was sold at the Hôtel Drouot on May 26th. This collection, the property of the publisher Hetzel, who was the friend, and often the banker of Gavarni, comprised some of the artist's very finest works. Each of the water-colors, representing all kinds of characters of the human comedy at Paris, mostly single figures, was accompanied by an autograph legend. These water-colors were sold without the right of reproduction and at prices which are instructive and eloquent when we remember that less than twenty years ago \$20 was considered a high price for a Gavarni, and when you could buy for eight or ten dollars any amount of simple heads by Gavarni, such as now sell readily for eighty or a hundred dollars. I subjoin the most important prices paid: A usurer counting on his fingers, water-color over pen drawing, 1900 fr.; an amateur gardener among his plants, water-color with gouache, 1750 fr.; an old woman taking snuff with an important air—legend, "Pour lors, un soir, Talma me dit: Cora"—1700 fr.; a young man with a whip, 1600 fr. Twenty others sold for prices varying from 1500 to 1000 fr., and the rest for prices varying from 1000 fr. to 400 fr., according to their importance. Three of the finest were bought by G. A. Lucas for the Walters Collection in Baltimore, which already comprises upward of a hundred choice specimens of Gavarni's talent.

THE following, from The (London) Queen, is hardly reassuring to those who contributed the immense fund for purchasing the Cesnola collection of Cypriote antiquities in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It will, however, open the eyes of some sanguine persons who have believed the representations that the Museum could always realize a handsome sum by selling a portion of the collection:

The remarkable collection of Cypriote antiquities chiefly

found by the distinguished discoverer of Cyprus relics, Gen. Luigi di Cesnola, and partly by his younger brother, Major A. di Cesnola, which had been purchased by Mr. E. H. Lawrence, F.S.A., who thus contributed in an essential manner to the prosecution of the search, was finally disposed of by Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson, and Hodge with a three days' sale, ending on Saturday last, the former sale in June last having dispersed a similar part of this interesting museum. The number of delicately formed glass vessels, found absolutely perfect after the lapse of something like two thousand years, was as astonishing as the graceful forms and beautifully designed ornament to be seen on nearly all the various objects. The taste for these ancient works of art is, however, too recondite to create anything like high prices, however great is the antiquarian interest attaching to them. Many really excellent specimens were sold for a few shillings, and scarcely anything in the collection brought more than five guineas; so that we may conclude the hunting ground of Cyprus is not likely to find many more such enthusiastic diggers as the Cesnolas and Mr. Lang, and, indeed, the subject has been pretty well exhausted by them.

MONTEZUMA.

AMERICAN WOMEN IN THE PARIS SALON.

IT is delightful to visit the Salon from year to year and to note the steady advance in merit made by the American women who have contributed for several successive seasons. One or two of them, to be sure, arrive at a certain degree of excellence and stop there as if paralyzed. Notably of this unfortunate number is Miss Elizabeth Gardner, who, for at least six years, has gone on sending her porcelain-finished imitations of Bouguereau; always the same two models in the same monotonous contrast of blonde and brunette, always without any advance in knowledge of composition, or in the expression of any sort of feeling, always wearisomely pretty yesterday, to-day, and forever. "La Coupe Improvisée" of to-day might be the "Girl and Bird" or the "Cage and Jailer" of any other year, for there is no variation existing in the memory of man concerning them. This seems, perhaps, to indicate that a certain amount of foreign artistic study is supremely beneficial to our ambitious young countrywomen, but that the usual feminine inclination to follow and imitate rather than to invent and discover petrifies them into feeble echoes of their masters.

Unless the writer's memory is at fault, the name of Nina Batchelor, of Frankfort, is almost a new one upon the walls of the Salon. Her hand is not new to art, however, as her picture, "A Naval Combat," distinctly proves. Not many pictures in the entire exhibition have more delicate firmness of touch, more refined freedom of manner, more poetry of color, more delightful treatment of the nude. The "Naval Combat" represents two lovely boys of eight and twelve, hip-deep in tumbling water, splashing each other with might and main. The face of one is turned to the spectator, the back of the other. The face turned toward us is running over with fun, a bright, joyous, innocent boy's face, reminding one somehow of a young faun's, and touching the heart with its sweet, delightful, and poetic infantile naturalism. Even the water itself, although beautifully rendered, has somewhat the manner of poetic fable, being not real water, but an ideal substitute, water in looks, although seen to be more transparent and ethereal than the heavier real fluid ever is!

Matilda Lotz, whose dogs are three years old in the Salon, sends two more of them this year. These two are upon the same canvas, and are called "Les Amis du Peintre." They are blonde and brunette, like Miss Gardner's perennial two models, and are as effective contrasts to each other as Landseer's "Pride and Humility." The canvas is larger and much more ambitious than any of this lady's previous contributions; and that her ambition was not over-vaulting is proved by the fact that she is hung upon the line. A painter's knapsack and umbrella lie upon the ground before the dogs, who look alert and expectant out of the picture. It is spirited work and good color.

Elizabeth Strong, of Bridgeport, sends also a "dog-scape" called "Diner en Famille." A dog and cat dine from the same dish before a weather-beaten kennel. It is rather a dull-colored canvas—the animals too low in relief amid the opaque greens—but the drawing is good, and the technique is conscientious, even if of, as yet, somewhat limited skill.

Mrs. L. L. Williams, of Boston, sends "Mange donc!" not goats this year, but a lovely young girl and a piquant canary. The technique shows this artist's usual delicacy of touch and disposition to deal with tints rather than with colors. The modelling is